

TRI-WEEKLY KENTUCKY YEOMAN.

VOL. IX.

FRANKFORT, KENTUCKY, NOVEMBER 5, 1859.

NO. 106.

USELESS CHIPS.

BEN J. MONROE,
Attorney at Law, and
General Land Agent,
LEAVENWORTH CITY, KANSAS.

WHILE I AM IN KANSAS, THE
TERRITORY OF KANSAS, I WILL
DO MY BEST TO GET YOU
PROMPT AND SATISFACTORY
ADVICE ON ALL YOUR QUESTIONS
AND THOSE OF YOUR FRIENDS.

DR. JOHN L. PHYTHIAN,
HAVING BEEN A MEMBER OF THE
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FOR SEVEN YEARS, AND
A MEMBER OF THE KANSAS
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CONTINENTAL CLOAKS,
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THE TRI-WEEKLY YEOMAN.

[From the N. Y. Day Book.]

Sketch of Hon James Guthrie.

It cannot be denied that the Hon. James Guthrie, of Kentucky, occupies a commanding position before his fellow-citizens. His name has been repeatedly mentioned in connection with the next Presidency, and many of his friends feel sanguine that the convention will finally unite upon him. Whether this great distinction be more for Mr. Guthrie or not, a brief sketch of his life will prove both interesting and instructive, and I take the liberty of asking for a place for it in the columns of your widely circulated journal.

Mr. Guthrie was born in 1793 at Bloomfield, Nelson county, Kentucky, about forty miles from Louisville, in one of the richest agricultural districts of that famous agricultural State. His parents were in moderate circumstances, and young Guthrie, it is believed, never received other education than the common school or perhaps village academy afforded. He resided at home until he was near twenty years of age, not infrequently making trips on flat boats to New Orleans, and, in a word, engaged in the usual labors of farmers' sons. About the age of twenty he went to Bardstown, the county-seat of Nelson county, where he entered the law office of the celebrated Judge John Rowan, formerly United States Senator from Kentucky, and a lawyer of great eminence and ability. It was not long before young Guthrie was seen to possess a mind of rare acuteness, and an energy of character at once indomitable and persevering. He did not attract attention by any wonderful brilliancy, but rather for a solid judgment, stern integrity, and great solidity of character. He passed about two years in Judge Rowan's office, when he opened an office of his own, for a brief period, in the same town; but soon after removed to the city of Louisville, where he still resides, and which owes to his steady industry and unwavering energy much of its present importance as a business place.

For many years Mr. Guthrie devoted himself assiduously to the duties of his profession, and took a high rank at the bar as a sound, able, and successful lawyer. In 1839 he was elected to the State Senate of Kentucky, from the city of Louisville, beating Frank Johnson, a popular man, and that, too, when the city was giving a regular Whig majority of 1,000. This election affords a fair indication of Mr. Guthrie's popularity in his own city, especially as he was thus able to carry it when the Whig party of Kentucky was in all its pristine vigor, and straining every nerve to elect Mr. Clay to the Presidency.

Mr. Guthrie's career in the Legislature of his native State was not attended with any very important features, but it soon became evident that he carried the same unbending integrity into his public career that characterized his private life. During Mr. Guthrie's legislative term there was a great effort made by certain parties to saddle Kentucky with a heavy State debt in order to build a railroad from Cincinnati to Charleston. This project in Mr. Guthrie's most determined enemy, and though his party were greatly in the minority, yet he succeeded in defeating the measure and saving the State from a heavy load of debt. Whilst a member of the Senate, Mr. Guthrie took great interest in the common schools of his native State. Every cause for the benefit of the masses has ever received Mr. Guthrie's warm approval, while anything tending to give advantages to the few which denoted the many have ever met with his most uncompromising opposition.

After he left the Senate Mr. Guthrie returned to the practice of his profession, which was uninterrupted by any particular event of public character until the Presidential canvass of 1844, when Mr. Polk was the Democratic candidate. Mr. Guthrie took an active and earnest part in this campaign, and canvassed Kentucky, a portion of Indiana and Tennessee, and making one speech in Cincinnati. The influence he exercised was very great, and to his efforts the Democrats were largely indebted for success in that memorable contest. His time, talents, and means were freely given, and after the election of Mr. Polk was secured, he positively declined accepting anything the President could bestow.

In 1849 Mr. Guthrie was elected a member to the State Convention, convened for the purpose of framing a new Constitution for the State. The contest for delegates was a most exciting one, and again the popularity of Mr. Guthrie among his own townsmen was apparent. He was elected from Louisville, together with Hon. Wm. Preston, our present Minister to Spain, and James Budd, Esq., bearing a very popular opposition ticket, composed of Chapman Coleman, Esq., a son-in-law of Senator Crittenden, Jas. Speed, Esq., one of the first lawyers of Kentucky, and D. L. Beatty, Esq., formerly Mayor of that city.

The Convention, upon its organization, bestowed upon Mr. Guthrie the distinguished honor of choosing him its presiding officer, to which position he was elected over the Hon. Archibald Dixon, afterwards United States Senator, and one of the most accomplished men in the State. Mr. Guthrie made an admirable presiding officer, for, with a mind of great acuteness, he combined a decision and energy of action which stamped him as an executive officer of rare ability.

In 1851, when Hon. L. W. Powell was nominated for Governor, Mr. Guthrie took an active part, and to his exertions, more than any other man's, was the glorious result of making Kentucky a Democratic State, after a lapse of so many years. In 1852 he took a prominent part in the election of Gen. Pierce, and as usual threw all his influence in behalf of Democratic candidates and Democratic principles. In 1854 Gen. Pierce unexpectedly tendered to Mr. Guthrie the position of Secretary of the Treasury in his cabinet, and he accepted it, the first and only time he ever held that he did not receive directly from the hands of the people.

Mr. Guthrie's career as Secretary of the Treasury is almost unnecessary for us to speak for, as well known to the public, and we shall therefore only allude briefly to a few prominent points. It was soon discovered that a master mind was at the helm of financial affairs, and one, too, that saw with an eagle glance every item of wasteful extravagance. It was the first time that the superior facilities of Mr. Guthrie had enjoyed the opportunity to make their mark upon the entire nation, and certainly it was that every portion of the country felt the weight and influence of them. He took the oath of office as Secretary of the Treasury on the 8th of March, 1853, and on that very day save the nation nearly one million dollars. This he did by commanding at once some of Mr. Corwin's extravagant orders. Mr. Guthrie soon investigated every portion of the department under his control, cut off many useless offices, and infused new life and activity into every collection district in the Union. "Retrenchment" was his motto, and fully and ably he carried it out. There were no Grahams and Gardners in his day, and it was currently reported that what a man got from the Treasury illegally while "Jim Guthrie" was at its head, would never make him rich. We believe Mr. Guthrie did more to convince people that they ought to be honest in politics as well as in other respects, than perhaps any of his predecessors. In a

word, he created a moral tone among the government employees which was at once healthful and full of promise.

Since leaving the Treasury department, Mr. Guthrie has devoted his energies to effect the completion of the Nashville and Louisville Railroad, which, like everything he really attempts, has been successful. Every aspect of Mr. Guthrie's career affords a picture which Americans can contemplate with unalloyed satisfaction. Left in early life to achieve for himself a place and position in the world, he rose by dint of his own exertions, and by the force of native talent alone, has taken rank among the first men of our country. There are no adventitious characteristics about Mr. Guthrie. He does not dazzle the people by a fierce and glaring brilliancy, nor stoop to catch popular applause by appealing to prejudices or passions, but with a firm devotion to the right, which neither the blandishments of power nor the weakness of ambitious desires could for a moment swerve, he presents to the American people one of the truest representations of sterling integrity, unswilled patriotism, and true devotion to the interests of the people, which this country has ever produced. As we stated in the outset, his name has been inged by many of his friends as a suitable one for the consideration of the Democratic National Convention. But no man who has the last idea of Mr. Guthrie's character could for a moment connect him with any effort to secure the nomination. Never, by word or act do we believe he would do anything to secure the support of any man, much less resort to means which other men have adopted. It would not be like Mr. Guthrie to seek office. His Jacksonian pride and independence would revolt at any such proceeding. He would not be plain-spoken, honest-hearted James' Guthrie, that he is, were he capable of any such inuendos. If Mr. Guthrie receives the nomination at Charleston, it will be because the American people say of their own accord that he is "the right man for the right place," and it may be safely set down as a rule to which there are few exceptions that it is only such men who are really fit for, or deserve the exalted position of President of the United States. If a man can be so transported by dreams of ambition as to forget the dignity of the office he aspires to reach, and indulge in petty tricks or party squabbles to secure it, it may be safely concluded that he is not worthy of the position. In the midst of these discussions upon the next Presidency, Mr. Guthrie has maintained a dignified silence, which commands him, in our estimation, the more to popular esteem and support.

The great points in Mr. Guthrie's character may be summed up as follows: Sareng common sense, unflinching energy, a powerful will, and Jacksonian pluck and independence. These characteristics he fully displayed while Secretary of the Treasury. He brought to bear on his office the strictest accountability and the most rigid economy. Where expenditures were necessary he was liberal and considerate, but where no strong public reason existed for them, or where the law did not warrant them, not a cent. He was vigorously opposed to running in debt. "Pay as you go" has been the motto of his life. This he carried into his public career, and succeeded in inforcing it more fully than any of his predecessors. No man stands before the American people to-day with a clearer record, a more spotless integrity, or truer devotion to his country, than Mr. Guthrie. It is believed by many, and the mind is increasing, that the present era needs a man of bold and firm character, who knows the right and has the nerve to carry it out—one who will strike terror into the lobbies of Congress, and scourge the corruptionists who, year after year, swarm to the national capital, and who are constantly growing bolder and more insidious, almost defying the power of the President, while plundering without remorse the pockets of the people. Mr. Guthrie would be just the man for such a crisis, and as he is known to be in every other respect inexcusable, there can be no doubt that, should the Charleston Convention choose him as the standard-bearer of the Democratic party in 1860, a glorious victory would once more pierce upon its banner.

In person Mr. Guthrie is tall and commanding. He looks to be even more than six feet. His hair is gray, and with a large, massive head and an impressive manner, he strikes one at once as no ordinary man. At first Mr. Guthrie's manners do not always please as much as those of some men more courtly and polished, but you soon discover that in all that pertains to true politeness he has no superior. His friendship is not ostentatious, but it is none the less real. *However* forakes a friend. He would not grant his confidence hastily, but once received, the recipient may rest secure that it will be retained as long as he is deserving of it.

In his own city Mr. Guthrie was destined to be the distinguished honor of choosing him its presiding officer, to which position he was elected over the Hon. Archibald Dixon, afterwards United States Senator, and one of the most accomplished men in the State. Mr. Guthrie made an admirable presiding officer, for, with a mind of great acuteness, he combined a decision and energy of action which stamped him as an executive officer of rare ability.

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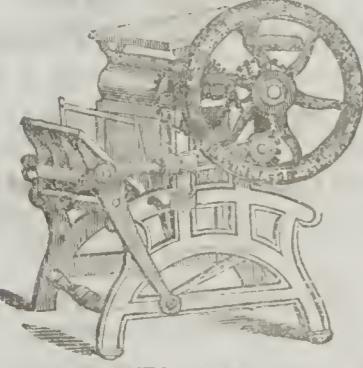
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